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Message Text

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17
ACTION AGR-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 EUR-12 /038 W
---------- 038301
R 090840Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5117
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL ORAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, ETRD, AG
SUBJECT: ALGERIAN GRAIN HARVEST: EXCELLENT BUT PERHAPS NOT UP TO EXPECTATIONS

REF: (A) ORAN A-20, (B) STATE 219108

1. AUGUST 25 EDITION OF EL MOUDJAHID CARRIED ARTICLE SUMMARIZING ALGERIAN GRAIN HARVEST FIGURES UP TO 30 JULY. FIGURES CITED FOR CULTIVATED AREAS AND HARVESTS TO 30 JULY ARE AS FOLLOWS:
AREA UNDER CULTIVATION: 3,117,013 HECTARES (CITED AS RECORD NUMBER)
AREA HARVESTED (AS OF 30 JULY: 1,686,007 HECTARES
QUANTITIES HARVESTED AS OF 30 JULY: APPROX. ONE MILLION METRIC TONS

2. FOLLOWING IS BREAKDOWN OF HARVEST FIGURES FOR BARLEY, SOFT WHEAT, HARD WHEAT AND OATS: AS OF JULY 30:
BARLEY: 370,906 MT
SOFT WHEAT: 352,698 MT
HARD WHEAT: 240,393 MT
OATS: 21,298 MT

3. ARTICLE CITES PROBLEMS SUCH AS WET WEATHER IN JUNE AND JULY WHICH DELAYED HARVEST AND LACK OF STORAGE
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FACILITIES FOR HARVESTED GRAINS. MENTIONS ALSO FACT

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THAT SOME VILAYAS HAVE NOT REPORTED THEIR HARVEST FIGURES.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST PUBLIC INDICATION THAT EFFECTIVE HARVEST MAY NOT BE AS GOOD AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED (SEE ORAN REFAIR QUOTING PREDICTION TOTAL HARVEST OF 2.7 MILLION TONS). RUMORS HAVE ABOUNDED RECENTLY THAT, ALTHOUGH CROP IN FIELDS MAY INDEED TOTAL 2.7 MILLION TONS, PROBLEMS OF HARVESTING, STOCKAGE AND TRANSPORTATION WILL MAKE IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT SUCH AMOUNT WILL EVER REACH POPULATION,

5. ASSUMING, HOWEVER, THAT HALF-WAY POINT HARVEST FIGURE OF ONE MILLION TONS DOES REPRESENT APPROX HALF TOTAL HARVEST, THIS STILL WILL MAKE 1976 HARVEST BEST SINCE 1972 2.7 MILLION TON HARVEST.

6. GIVEN ALGERIA'S AVERAGE PRODUCTION PLUS IMPORT STATISTICS FOR PAST FOUR YEARS, IT LIKELY THAT ALGERIA MAY STILL NEED IMPORT 300,000 TO 500,000 TONS DURING NEXT TWELVE MONTHS. IT ALSO LIKELY THAT GREATEST SHORTFALL WILL BE IN HARD WHEAT. CANADIAN WHEAT DEAL WHEREBY ALGERIA WILL IMPORT MINIMUM OF ONE MILLION TONS CANADIAN WHEAT DURING NEXT THREE YEARS IS LIKELY TO ABSORB MOST OF THIS SHORTFALL. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT UNLIKELY, THERE FORE, THAT ALGERIANS WILL BE CONTRACTING FOR VERY MUCH WHEAT FROM U.S. DURING NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, ALGTHOUGH 1976 U.S. EXPORT STATISTICS WILL CONTINUE TO REFLECT DELIVERIES OF PREVIOUSLY CONTRACTED WHEAT.

7. EMBASSY HOPES TO BE ABLE OBTAIN MORE UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON HARVEST, PROBABLY NEXT WEEK. WILL ADVISE. PARKER

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